

Village fury over gipsy caravan site

A CHELMSFORD village is preparing opposition to a private gipsy caravan site being built on a farm.

East Hanningfield villagers are planning to fight the scheme for nine hardstandings opposite Alands Farm in Back Lane, which could take 27 caravans and nine outhouses.

More than 30 people turned up to last week's parish meeting to protest and plans are in hand to hold a public meeting to gauge the views of the 1,100 residents of the area.

Borough councillor Ron Saunders

By Peter Baker

says the local school is unable to take any more students and the bus service is inadequate.

Chelmsford planning department last week received an application for the scheme including an access road on what is currently farmland.

Clare Frewin who recently moved into the village said: "The original information suggested that the site would consist of nine plots and an amenity block. However, when we went to see the published plans the

site consisted of 27 caravans. There are also to be two amenity blocks butted up against existing properties and an access road very close to another house.

"We are also very concerned about the health and safety issues surrounding this settlement, as no extra drainage is to be built."

The application is for a change of use from agricultural to residential and has not yet been placed on a planning committee agenda.

Cllr Saunders says he will represent village views against the scheme at the planning committee.

Recently a gipsy site in nearby Rettendon was closed by Chelmsford Borough Council after mobile homes moved out but access had to be given to several people claiming right of ownership.

Earlier this year there were ugly scenes at Little Waltham when the borough council closed a large gipsy site which had no planning permission at Cranham Road. Since then the council has said it will look into increasing official provision for gipsies and other travellers in the borough.

£1m saving on friendly stationery

ESSEX County Council and 14 borough and district councils in the county are set to save at least £1 million under a new contract for the supply of environmentally friendly stationery.

The new contract, with Banner Business Supplies, awarded by the county council in collaboration with the Procurement Agency for Essex, was made following one of the first "on-line reverse auctions" undertaken in local government.

Council Leader, Lord Hanningfield, said: "This shows that wisely applied this delivers significant value and efficiencies to the public sector."